

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Madam President. And I called the question last time because I thought this body would be ready to deal with this amendment, but obviously not, so I'm going to give you my views. LB 455 is a beginning and I think that the consensus has been that it's a good beginning. It has some limitations, goes farther than some people want; it doesn't go far enough, according to some people. So we're going to have to sit through a lot of amendments on this bill, like it or not, and many of these, as I said, will want to reduce benefits, some will want to increase. But this amendment does not deal with anything like that and I wish I could be as articulate as Senator Bromm and Senator Maurstad, Senator Jensen and Senator Witek on why this does not belong in the bill. Now this amendment was put in the committee amendment at the very last minute. It was a long list of amendments that Senator Wesely presented to us and there was little discussion. And, of course, we know Senator Wesely is concerned about health care and mandated health care and, in fact, the original committee amendment he presented substituted health care every time you see health insurance in this amendment that is before us today. But there was no public hearing on this part of the committee amendments and not that we have to have that but I do think that perhaps this would better come from the Banking and Insurance Committee. It has nothing to do with giving more welfare benefits or less welfare benefits. I also would like to repeat that this is going to be a long debate. We know it is. It's a very important debate and I certainly want to see that every amendment is considered and debated to the fullest. And, quite frankly, I did the call of the question because there wasn't anybody here as, indeed, there isn't here right now. We need to listen, we need to consider, we need to debate, but I would hope that we could do this with dispatch, that we could fairly do it and avoid the rancor and that we, indeed, could deal with each one of these amendments on principle. We all will disagree, well, or some will disagree, but let us accept one another's wishes or one another's amendments with consideration, not summarily rejecting them, but with consideration and then to vote the way that we best can represent our constituents. With that, I will tell you that I do support Senator Witek's amendment. I think it does not really have anything to do with the committee amendments as they affect LB 455.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute. Thank you, Senator Pirsch. Senator Maurstad. Senator Wesely.